Illiterate children in India

1665. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that in India today there are over 2.8 crores illiterate children of which half are engaged in the work of one kind or another;

(b) if so, what concrete steps Government intend to take to bring these children into the purview of the education system, whether through formal or informal or vocational education; and

(c) what are the details thereof ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT DEPTT. OF EDUCATION AND DEPTT. OF CULTURE (KUMARI SELJA) : (a) to (c) As per selected Educational Statistics compiled by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the projected population of total school going children in the age group of 6—14 as on March 1, 1993 was 15.69 crores and number of children enrolled in classes I to VIII was 14.40 crores. Number of children non-enrolled in the age group 6—14 years was 1.29 crores (8.22%). Most of these children according to research studies, are unable to avail of wholetime formal schooling because they have to work to supplement family income or otherwise assist family in house-hold chores.

Some of the concrete steps initiated to bring all children into the education systems are :

(i) make accessible the schooling facilities within easy walking distance and for those children who cannot attend formal schools, provide facilities for non-formal education at the time and place convenient to them;

(ii) incentives such as free books, free uniforms, scholarships and mid-day meals for children coming from poor families;

(iii) establish contact with parents and provide guidance to bring in change in their attitude specially in case of first generation learners;

(iv) make curriculum interesting and learning a joyful activity;

(v) community mobilisation to the need for literacy;

(vi) appointment or female teachers;

(vii) vocational courses are normally provided at higher secondary (+2) stage but POA 1992 provided flexibility to start vocational courses after class VIII.

Cultural Exchange Agreements

1666. SHRI P. UPENDRA : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether a large number of Cultural Exchange agreements have been signed by India with various countries,

(b) if so, how many agreements have been made; and

(c) what were the activities under taken on these agreements ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT DEPTT. OF EDUCATION AND DEPTT. OF CULTURE (Km. SELJA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As on date there are 95 such Agreements.

(c) These agreements generally reflect the intention of India and the contracting countries to cooperate in the fields of education, art, culture, mass media and sports etc. As a follow up of these agreements, bilateral cultural exchange programmes are formulated. Exchanges in the above fields have taken place As on date, India has cultural exchange programmes with 68 countries.

Uniform curricula in universities

1667. SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI :

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chairman of UGC has recently called for the uniformity in the Curricula of the Courses of the Universities;